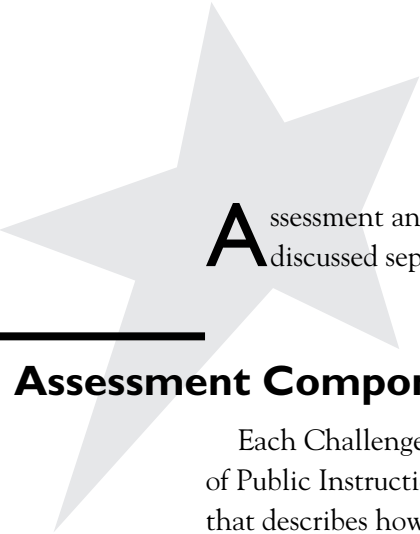


Elements of the Plan



Assessment and accountability, although closely related, are discussed separately in order to stress the significance of each.

Assessment Component

Each Challenge District will submit to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction by October 1 of each year an assessment plan that describes how the district will evaluate the standards-based achievement of all students, kindergarten through grade twelve. The assessment of achievement for each student is to be aligned to the Challenge District's locally adopted standards, which will be "at least as rigorous" as the Challenge Standards.

Elements of the assessment plan for 1996-97 include the following:

- 1. A description of the overall district assessment plan**

The assessment plan will describe how the Challenge District will evaluate the achievement of all students enrolled. In 1996-97, all students in kindergarten through grade eight and high school will receive standards-based evaluations in language arts and mathematics. The evaluations will determine whether each student has met the standard, is above the standard, or is below the standard in each content area. Additional content areas will be added in future years.

- 2. The employment of multiple measures**

The assessment plan will describe the "multiple measures" used to determine the standards-based level of student achievement in each content area. The assessments will be "multiple" both in number and in the variety of assessment

formats. The assessments will include, where available and appropriate:

- a. Information from standardized assessments
- b. Information from classroom tests, assignments, and projects completed outside of class, as well as teachers' observations of students' activities in class
- c. Information from districtwide tests or assessments, aligned to the local curriculum and standards and scored by teachers from across the district, using shared criteria for the evaluation of student work

3. Phase-in strategies

Each Challenge District will implement the full three-part assessment system for all students, where possible, beginning with language arts and mathematics in 1996-97. Each district's plan must also describe a phase-in strategy that includes the plan's full vision of assessment in language arts and mathematics and a projected time line for moving from the initial stage (1996-97) to the full model.

4. The combination of multiple measures into one general evaluation by content area

The assessment plan will describe the procedures that the district will employ to combine multiple measures of achievement into a single, standards-based judgment about each student, indicating whether he or she does or does not meet the standard.

5. A description of the necessary differences in assessment formats

The assessment plan will describe the differences in the assessment formats as they occur grade level by grade level, content area by content area, and for particular populations of students who are in need of specialized assessments.

6. Uniform standards-based evaluations

The assessment plan will describe the procedures that the Challenge District will employ to standardize the evaluation of individual student achievement and to ensure the accuracy of standards-based judgments.

Challenge Districts must develop and begin to implement plans to move beyond unmediated individual teachers'

judgments and also to move beyond standardized testing as an isolated measure of students' achievement. Districts must move toward "standardization" of a systematic evaluation of student achievement. Furthermore, it is important that they develop strategies and procedures to annually assess the accuracy and reliability of those evaluations and identify ways to continue improving them.

7. Professional development in standards-based assessment

The assessment plan will describe the professional development of teachers and district staff in the areas of standards-based education, standards-based instruction, and the collection and evaluation of students' test results, products, and performance.

Challenge Districts should describe ways in which their plans:

- a. Offer training to their teaching staff regarding the standards.
- b. Offer training in evaluating students' work.
- c. Offer tests, assignments, or tasks that can be used in common in many classrooms within a school or district.
- d. Offer models to schools and teachers of what standards-based achievement in a subject area and grade level looks like.
- e. Provide opportunities for teachers to score work together—schoolwide or districtwide—to obtain evaluation beyond a single classroom.

Accountability Component

Accountability is broadly defined as that overarching set of agreements and processes by which Challenge Districts will assure their local communities and the state that their programs are effective. This effectiveness will be determined primarily by the extent to which an increasing proportion of their students are meeting local board-adopted, Challenge Initiative grade-level standards and expectations. The accountability component consists of the following functions or categories:

- Goals and indicators
- Data and the collection process

- Reports to parents and the public
- Interpretation and use

This document sets forth the specific requirements that are to be described in the districts' accountability plans.

Goals and Indicators

Districts will specify the amount of progress they expect to make annually and will describe the methodology for measuring that progress in the following grades:

1. Kindergarten through eight

Challenge Districts will set targets for the improvement of student learning. Their plans will indicate the percentage of students who will meet or exceed grade-level standards and the length of time needed to reach that target. Challenge Districts are expected to have a minimum of 90 percent of their students meet the standards within a maximum of ten years.

Although it will not be possible for most districts to set the actual targets until they establish a baseline following the first year of assessment, the plan should include a description of the process they intend to follow and, if possible, their current thinking about their strategic approach.

2. Nine through twelve

Challenge Districts are to make substantial progress in preparing students to meet the new graduation requirements, including increased course requirements and voluntary assessments for the new high school diploma, the Golden State Certificate of Merit. Beginning with the class of 2004, all students, in order to graduate, must meet new course requirements and demonstrate that they have met the standards. The assessment requirement may be met by achieving a "Leaving Level" on the Golden State Exams or by achieving a comparable level on assessments adopted by the district.

Beginning in 1997-98, Challenge Districts will be expected to make progress toward this new set of requirements by:

- Increasing annually the percentage of graduating seniors who meet the augmented course requirements
- Increasing annually the percentage of students who

meet the new district-adopted academic standards. Districts are required to describe the procedures they propose to monitor this improvement.

Districts will develop a set of analysis strategies for computing their annual progress.

Each Challenge District will use the “successive groups” design in computing its progress. It may also wish to compute the results using a longitudinal design to provide a more complete picture of the district’s progress in increasing student achievement.

Districts will reduce dropout rates.

Each Challenge District will make continuous annual progress in reducing its annual dropout rate in grades nine through twelve toward a goal of no more than 1 percent.

Data and the Collection Process

Districts’ plans will describe the methods the districts will use to collect the necessary data to document the progress they are making toward each goal.

1. Measuring the main goals

Student Achievement:

(Student assessment procedures are described in the Assessment Component.)

Dropouts:

The measurement of dropouts will be based on the annual California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) count.

2. Ensuring that *all* students are included

Each Challenge District will include all students in its assessment and accountability system, including limited-English-proficient (LEP) students and special education students.

- LEP students are expected to meet the districts’ grade-level standards for all students; however, alternative but comparable assessment procedures and methods may be used when necessary in order to obtain valid and accurate evaluations.
- Students with disabilities are expected to meet the districts’ grade-level standards; however, different

assessment methods may be used when necessary in order to obtain valid and accurate evaluations. These may include the use of accommodations as well as alternative but comparable assessment procedures. In most districts, a small percentage of students will have IEPs that call for alternative assessment criteria. Those students may be assessed according to those district criteria.

The results for these students, assessed against those standards, are to be reported separately; the results for all other students are to be included in the district total.

3. Meeting the time lines for each aspect of the data collection and reporting processes

Student Achievement:

Challenge Districts will collect baseline results and report them to the Department of Education, according to the procedures and formats illustrated in Appendix A, by November 1, 1997, for language arts and mathematics; for history-social science, science, health, and physical education by November 1, 1999; and for the remaining areas of visual and performing arts, applied learning, career preparation, foreign language, and service learning by November 1, 2000.

Dropouts:

Challenge Districts will collect student dropout information as part of the CBEDS process and provide this information to the Department of Education.

4. Taking the steps over a period of years that will make their results comparable to other districts statewide

It is important that the achievement results reported by Challenge Districts, in addition to being valid and reliable, are comparable to previous years' results and to the results of other districts. It is equally clear that the results will not be truly comparable until the new standards-based statewide assessment system is implemented. In the meantime, Challenge Districts must commit to work together and with the Department to find ways to make the results as comparable as possible.

Challenge Districts need to work toward a relatively common set of content standards; common performance stan-

dards; and common assessment strategies and components, including the use of students' classroom work as one of the multiple measures and methods of weighting the different assessment components.

Furthermore, districts should involve teachers from different schools and districts in cross-training and "cross-moderation." This will help them to apply the standards accurately and fairly in judging students' work. Fortunately, this collaborative work will also help the Challenge Districts obtain more comparable results for the schools in their districts.

5. Integrating the Challenge Initiative with the following district and state efforts and programs:

- Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), Title I
Challenge Districts' assessment and accountability systems, when fully implemented, are expected to be compatible with state and federal program evaluation requirements. They will serve as the basis for meeting those requirements. IASA, Title I, for example, is less stringent than the Challenge Initiative in that it does not require assessment of all grade levels or in all curricular areas. On the other hand, Title I does require districts to analyze and report the results in greater detail; for example, in reporting school-level results.
- Proficiency assessment
Challenge Districts are expected to raise their expectations of student performance for high school graduation. These higher expectations are to be reflected in revised local board policies stating that students, beginning with the graduating class of 2004, will work toward and be assessed on the new standards established for the district. Because the district's Challenge assessment system will measure students' progress toward these standards, there should be no reason for a separate assessment component to meet the proficiency requirements.
- Assembly Bill 265: California Assessment Academic Achievement Act
All Challenge Districts are expected to participate by 1997-98 in the Pupil Testing Incentive Program component of AB 265 or in an equally rigorous standardized

assessment system approved by the Department of Education.

- Student learning plans

Although the relationship between the districts' learning plans and their assessment and accountability systems will vary considerably, it is assumed that all districts will use the individual student progress results collected pursuant to the Challenge accountability system in developing student learning plans.

- Department-operated programs: Program Quality Review (PQR), Coordinated Compliance Review (CCR), and Distinguished Schools Program

Each Challenge District will seek to use the results it collects for the Challenge Initiative in preparing for other programs, including PQR and CCR, and in submitting its Distinguished Schools proposals. Correspondingly, the Department will emphasize the use of Challenge Initiative information in operating those programs.

- School Accountability Report Card

Each Challenge District will integrate the student achievement and dropout results from the Challenge Initiative into the School Accountability Report Card and, beginning in July, 1997, will report the essential aspects of the Challenge Initiative results to the public as a part of that requirement.

- Student progress reporting

Each Challenge District will integrate the individual student results from its assessment and accountability system into its procedures for reporting students' progress to parents. This means that parents would receive results that are tied to district standards and are consistent with other information they receive.

Reports to Parents and the Public

Districts will describe their processes for analyzing the results and reporting them to parents and the community.

1. Reporting individual students' results

Challenge Districts will describe the process and timing for reporting individual students' results to students, their

parents, and teachers. The results reported to parents will indicate the extent to which each child meets the standards for that grade level as well as more detailed information of the district's choice.

2. Reporting to the public

Challenge Districts will describe how the results will be analyzed and reported to the community. The reports will show the progress of the total student population and the progress of, at least, students who have been disaggregated by:

- Gender
- Each major racial and ethnic group
- English proficiency status
- Students with disabilities as compared to nondisabled students
- Economically disadvantaged students as compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged

Interpretation and Use

Districts will describe their processes for ensuring that student achievement and other results are thoroughly analyzed and acted upon.

1. Reviewing the results

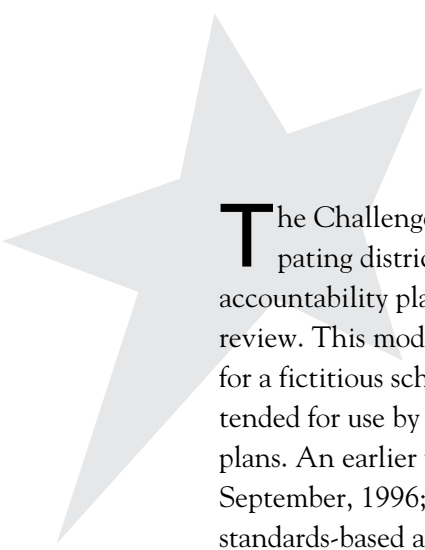
Challenge Districts will describe how the results will be reviewed systematically by district personnel and how the community will be involved in the process.

2. Using the results to improve programs

Challenge Districts will describe how the results will be used to improve the educational program for all students, especially in schools where a large proportion of the students do not meet grade-level expectations. The descriptions should include such factors as:

- Policy and administrative changes
- Instructional program changes
- Staff development
- Improvements in local assessment systems

Golden Poppy Unified: A Model for Planners



The Challenge School District Initiative requires that participating districts develop, adopt, and submit an assessment and accountability plan to the California Department of Education for review. This model plan was prepared by staff at the Department for a fictitious school district: **Golden Poppy Unified**. It is intended for use by participating districts as they develop their own plans. An earlier version of this model plan was circulated in September, 1996; it has been revised to reflect the emerging state standards-based accountability system. Any resemblance between Golden Poppy and an actual school district is purely coincidental.

This document is merely to serve as an example, and use of its format is not mandatory. For example, Challenge districts have the option of submitting separate assessment and accountability plans rather than one combined plan. For a review of the required content of district plans, please refer to Part I of this document.

District Profile

Golden Poppy Unified School District is located in a rural area of California. It includes the small community of Emerald City. It has two elementary schools with a total enrollment of approximately 1,500 students, a middle school with approximately 340 students, a high school of approximately 580 students, and a continuation high school of approximately 30 students. Five percent of these students have only limited proficiency in the English language; their first language is Spanish. Most of these limited-English-proficient (LEP) students are enrolled in kindergarten through grade three. Forty students are enrolled in special day classes; 175 students participate in resource specialist programs.

Golden Poppy's Plan

Golden Poppy's plan was developed as a result of a collaboration between its administrators, school staff, and parents. An earlier version of the plan was adopted by the district's governing board on September 16, 1996. It has since been modified to reflect the emerging state standards-based accountability system. This plan also serves as the basis for meeting the transitional requirements of Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) with regard to standards, assessment, and accountability.

In order to coordinate Challenge activities with other district programs, Golden Poppy has designated Mr. Charles Corsage as district Challenge coordinator. Mr. Corsage will have the assignment of maximizing the district's support of the Challenge Initiative by identifying existing district programs and activities that support realization of the district's Challenge objectives. Mr. Corsage is also serving as planning coordinator for IASA activities.

Challenge Objectives

By the year 2004 the Golden Poppy District intends to achieve the following Challenge objectives:

- All high school graduates will meet the district's high school performance standards and satisfy the Challenge course requirements.
- The one-year dropout rate for grades nine through twelve will be reduced from 4.7 percent (1995-96) to 1 percent.

By 2007 Golden Poppy intends to achieve the following Challenge and statewide objective:

- Ninety percent of its students will meet or exceed local district student performance standards.

The Challenge Assessment and Accountability System: A Conceptual Framework

In order to reach these objectives, the district will implement an integrated assessment and accountability system that measures student achievement on the basis of what students should know and be able to do. The core of this system is a set of clearly-defined

and well-articulated content and performance standards against which students will be measured. These performance standards will be the same for all students, except for a small number of students with severe disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) indicate that alternate criteria for evaluation are appropriate.

Golden Poppy is committed to the Challenge objective that *all* students be assessed. By this commitment, Golden Poppy understands that it will evaluate all students against the appropriate standards. The district does recognize that it may have to employ different assessment methods for some students in order to obtain valid and accurate results. These methods may include the use of accommodations for students with disabilities and the use of alternative but comparable assessments for students who require them. These comparable assessments include Spanish-language assessments for Spanish-speaking students for whom the results of a standardized assessment in English would be invalid.

Determinations of whether or not students meet the standards will derive from the following multiple measures:

- Teacher evaluation of classroom work, including tests, assignments, student portfolios, and projects
- Results from standardized tests
- Districtwide assessments, including writing samples, proficiency examinations, and districtwide performance tasks

District curriculum committee members who have been involved in the development of standards will define performance thresholds for each of these measures by grade level for each content area. Near the end of the school year, teachers will determine on the basis of classroom work whether or not a student is:

- Exceeding grade-level standards in a content area
- Meeting grade-level standards in a content area
- Not meeting grade-level standards in a content area

Evaluators will make similar judgments with regard to the other measures and combine the results to arrive at an overall score. In arriving at this overall judgment, evaluators will give the most weight to teacher evaluation of classroom work. Where the results from three or more measures are available, Golden Poppy will assign teacher evaluation a weight of 40 percent with the remaining 60 percent distributed evenly between the other components. For school year 1996-97, if only two components are available, teacher evaluation will count 55 percent and the remaining component 45 percent.

Challenge Assessment: Percentage Weights Using Multiple Measures up to Four

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Using 2 Measures</i>	<i>Using 3 Measures</i>	<i>Using 4 Measures</i>
Classroom Work	55	40	40
Second Component	45 (or)	30	20
Third Component	45	30	20
Fourth Component			20

To arrive at its overall evaluation, the district will assign a numerical score for each available measure, using the following scale:

- 3 = exceeding grade-level standards
- 2 = meeting grade-level standards
- 1 = not meeting grade-level standards

Evaluators will then determine an overall score according to the methodology described in Appendix A.

Golden Poppy believes that the effectiveness of its educational program should be measured by how many of its students succeed in meeting or exceeding district performance standards; the school district, including administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, and students, should be held accountable for students' achievement. In order to exercise their responsibilities, all stakeholders should understand:

- The new content and performance standards
- The new Challenge assessment, including how the present standardized tests and districtwide assessments relate to it
- The results of the Challenge assessment, once they become available

The district will ensure that this information is disseminated through a regular series of districtwide and schoolwide meetings on standards, assessment, and accountability.

Golden Poppy will use results from the Challenge assessment for purposes other than accountability. It is the district's intent that the results will provide means of improving instruction, both at the individual and group levels. The results from the Challenge assessment will constitute one of the major components of each student's learning plan. These plans, which remain to be devel-

oped, will accompany students throughout their education in the district. Evaluations of individual achievement will also be aggregated into school-level and district-level results that will be used to identify weaknesses in instructional programs. By 2004 the district plans to integrate fully its present program of proficiency assessments into the new Challenge assessment system. Finally, because students' work is central to the Challenge assessment, the district will use results from that assessment to prepare for future Program Quality Reviews and Coordinated Compliance Reviews. It will also use these results to comply with the new requirements of the Consolidated Application for Categorical Funding.

To oversee the future development of this system, the district forms an assessment and accountability task force during the 1996-97 school year. This task force is composed of the superintendent, principals, teachers, district staff, and parents. The task force deals with questions and problems that arise as the system is implemented in the areas of mathematics and language arts as well as issues associated with the future development of the plan. In the 1997-98 school year, the district will form a similar task force to implement the Challenge system in the district's high schools, adopt new graduation requirements, and reduce the dropout rate.

The Plan for Implementation of the System

The district's plan for implementation of the Challenge assessment and accountability system consists of the following two components:

In a *short-term component*, the district will detail how it has introduced the multiple-measure method of assessment for the content areas of mathematics and language arts (reading, writing, and listening-speaking) in the 1996-97 school year and will report the results of that assessment.

In a *long-term component*, the district will outline how it plans to expand this system to introduce additional measures in 1997-98 and additional content areas in 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. The district will also indicate how it intends to ensure that its high school graduates meet the more rigorous Challenge graduation requirements by 2004.

The schedule of implementation of the Challenge assessment in mathematics and language arts is summarized in Appendix B. The district will provide equivalent charts in annual updates for other

content areas as the district adds them to the schedule. Appendix C is adapted from a Department of Education-developed form for reporting school-level results of a standards-based assessment to the Department. (Similar forms will be used to report results for the district as well as for required student subgroups.) Appendix D is a Department-developed form for reporting the percentage of high school graduates who meet the Challenge graduation requirements.

The Short-Term Component: The New System in Mathematics and Language Arts

In 1996-97 Golden Poppy evaluates all students in kindergarten through grade twelve to ascertain whether they meet performance standards in mathematics and in language arts. The district will generate individual student-level results and provide them to principals, teachers, and parents. It will also aggregate student-level results to produce district-level, school-level, and student subgroup results by gender, ethnicity, English language proficiency, participation in special programs (Title I; Special Education; Migrant; Gifted and Talented), and economic disadvantage. These categories encompass those required for IASA, Title I, reporting.

Prior to gathering and reporting Challenge assessment data in 1997, Golden Poppy engages in two major activities: professional development relating to standards-based education in mathematics and language arts; and expansion of the district's program of performance assessments.

Professional Development Related to Standards-Based Education

Golden Poppy's teachers and parents are involved in the development of the district's Challenge standards in the content areas of mathematics and language arts. As part of these activities, the district has compiled examples of student work that meet or exceed Challenge performance standards. In 1996-97 the district has an active program of professional development that will focus on teacher evaluation of classroom work with respect to the new standards. This will include:

- Districtwide and schoolwide meetings for distribution of Golden Poppy's content and performance standards in the areas of mathematics and language arts

- Districtwide and schoolwide training in the evaluation of students' work, using standards in mathematics and language arts to review the compilation of examples of students' work
- Districtwide development of rubrics on which to judge students' classroom performances
- Districtwide development of models of what standards-based achievement in mathematics and language arts should look like
- Districtwide assistance with the implementation of classroom-based and schoolwide portfolio assessment
- Districtwide opportunities for teachers to work together as they score writing samples and student portfolios

A major objective of these activities is to foster the comparability of teachers' judgments in applying performance standards, both from one classroom to another and from one school to another.

The active participation of professional staff and parents is vital to the success of this plan, and staff development is an integral component of the plan. The district dedicated all available time during in-service days in 1996-97 to the new content and performance standards and the Challenge assessment in language arts and mathematics. Following the publication of baseline data in mathematics and language arts, a portion of staff development in the fall of 1997 will be devoted to evaluating the data and devising strategies for improving students' performance in these content areas.

Standardized Assessments

The Golden Poppy District presently administers standardized norm-referenced assessments in mathematics, reading, written expression, and spelling in grades two through ten in accordance with the Pupil Testing Incentive Program (PTIP) under AB 265. These tests have been reviewed for validity and reliability using the test publisher's guidelines. Results from the PTIP will be available to the district in determining whether or not its students in grades two through ten meet the standards in mathematics and language arts.

Districtwide Assessments

Golden Poppy has in operation districtwide assessments in writing in grades two through twelve; a districtwide team of teachers will review the assessments in order to ensure that the

items are linked to the new district standards in language arts. The district hopes to introduce similar assessments in mathematics in 1997-98. Writing assessments are presently available in both Spanish and English versions, and the district plans an equivalent program for the mathematics assessments.

The district administers a proficiency examination in English, mathematics, and composition to its tenth graders. These tests are being revised to reflect new high school standards in mathematics and language arts. The results of the examinations will be used in determining whether Golden Poppy's high school students meet or exceed standards. Once students pass the proficiency examination, they are not required to take the examination in future years; however, for reporting purposes they will be considered to be at standard.

Finally, each year the district administers a reading and mathematics assessment to all students in kindergarten and first grade. In 1996-97 results from this assessment will be combined with teachers' judgments to determine whether or not students are meeting grade-level expectations. For 1997-98 the district will supplement this assessment by developing a small number of common performance tasks for students in kindergarten and first grade. A major purpose of assessment in these early grades is and will be to diagnose individual weaknesses that can be remedied before a student enrolls in grade two.

Collection and Reporting of Results

By the end of the 1996-97 school year the district informs parents of their children's results from the Challenge assessment program in mathematics and language arts. In 1996-97 the district includes the assessment results as an attachment to a student's report card; the district will consider whether it is feasible in the future to incorporate the results into the body of the report card. If possible, teachers will include assessment results as part of parent-teacher conferences.

By November 1, 1997, Golden Poppy will report district-level, school-level, and student subgroup results to the Department of Education in a format similar to that in Appendix C. It will also use these results to meet the reporting requirements of IASA. In reporting data and measuring growth, Golden Poppy will use the successive groups approach, in which the percentages of students who meet or exceed the standards are calculated from year to year. The differences between these percentages are then recorded. The

report will include results for all students who have been enrolled in the district since the beginning of the school year.

In November, 1997, the district will also furnish similar summaries to the Golden Poppy Board of Education and to school site councils. To measure the progress of the district toward meeting its other Challenge objectives, Golden Poppy will report on the percentage of its 1997 graduates who met the new Challenge course requirements as well as the number of dropouts in 1996-1997 for grades nine through twelve. In November, 1997, the district will include these data in the School Accountability Report Cards that it makes available to parents and the larger community. The district will also consult local civic groups, including the Emerald City Chamber of Commerce, to identify effective means of reaching the largest possible audience with news about Challenge assessment results.

Targets and Feedback Mechanisms

Following the gathering and reporting of results in 1997, Golden Poppy will use the data as baselines in order to establish growth targets in mathematics and language arts. Specifically, the district will determine the amount of growth that it will take to reach the Challenge target of 90 percent of its students meeting or exceeding performance standards in these content areas by the year 2007. The district will then use this amount of growth as the basis for establishing average annual growth targets.

Through districtwide and schoolwide meetings, the district will ensure that professional staff have the opportunity to evaluate the results from the previous year's assessment, identify apparent weaknesses in academic performance, and develop an integrated strategy for improving student achievement in the content areas assessed. Principals will meet with teachers to review instances in which teachers' judgments were inconsistent with the other measures. A districtwide quality control team composed of Mr. Corsage, principals, and teachers will develop strategies to enhance the uniformity of teachers' evaluations of classroom work.

The Long-Term Component: Expansion, Coordination, and Improvement

In the 1997-98 school year, Golden Poppy will focus on three priorities in its long-term planning: expanding the Challenge

assessment and accountability system to include new content areas; coordinating the development of the system with the introduction of the new high school graduation requirements; and improving the system.

Expansion of the System

Golden Poppy plans to add other measures and content areas to its assessment and accountability system in conjunction with the development of content and performance standards in these areas. One of the major objectives of the assessment and accountability task force will be to ensure a smooth expansion of the system. The task force will also consider the feasibility of adding standardized assessments or district-developed performance assessments in these new content areas. Until this is done, the Challenge assessment in the other content areas will rely solely on teachers' evaluations of classroom work, with the exception of physical education for grades five, seven, and nine, for which results from the physical performance tests designated by the State Board of Education are available.

Because of the complex issues involved in the development of high school standards and assessments in content areas other than mathematics and language arts, Golden Poppy will delay phasing in these additional content areas until 1998-99. The timetable for long-term implementation is:

1997-98

- Expansion of high school Challenge assessment in mathematics and language arts to include additional measures
- Adoption of standards in history-social science, science, physical education, and health education in kindergarten through grade twelve

1998-99

- Introduction of Challenge assessment for history-social science, science, physical education, and health education in kindergarten through grade twelve; establishment of baseline data in those content areas
- Adoption of standards for visual and performing arts, foreign languages, applied learning, career preparation, and service learning in kindergarten through grade twelve

1999-2000

- Introduction of Challenge assessment for visual and performing arts, foreign languages, applied learning, career prepara-

tion, and service learning in kindergarten through grade twelve; establishment of baseline data in those content areas

June, 2000

- Adoption of new graduation course requirements for entering high school freshmen

Coordination with High School Graduation Requirements

One of the most important objectives of the Challenge Initiative is to graduate high school students who possess the skills and knowledge to succeed in college or the workplace. At the beginning of the 1997-98 school year, Golden Poppy will form a second Challenge task force that will focus on the Challenge elements that are particular to high schools. This task force will have some members in common with the assessment and accountability task force; it will also include members from the business and labor community in Emerald City.

The major activities for the high school task force will be to:

- Consider how to integrate the new Challenge assessment and accountability system into the Challenge high school graduation course requirements.
- Compare Golden Poppy's existing high school graduation requirements to those of the Challenge Initiative, identify those requirements that need to be made more rigorous, and recommend a schedule of implementation for the governing board with the goal that all these requirements are in place for ninth graders entering high school in 2000.
- Identify those course requirements that can be met through satisfactory performance on an existing Golden State examination and create a timetable for the development of local, end-of-course examinations for those courses not having a corresponding Golden State Examination.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Golden Poppy's existing dropout prevention program and the potential impact of more rigorous graduation requirements on the dropout rate.

Beginning in 1997-98 Golden Poppy will annually determine the percentage of each graduating class who met Challenge High School diploma requirements in order to monitor progress toward the goal that all graduates will meet all requirements by 2004. These percentages will be reported to CDE in a format comparable to that in Appendix D.

Improvement of the Assessment and Accountability System

In order to ensure the success of the Challenge, it is vital for districts to evaluate Challenge activities on a routine basis with the goal of improving performance. During 1996-97 Golden Poppy will develop an evaluation process by which it compares Challenge assessment results to standardized test results and academic grades. Once a statewide assessment is developed and administered, the district will also use results from that assessment to calibrate its own Challenge assessment system.

The Challenge assessment system will need to be updated annually as it expands and as improvements result from the identification of weaknesses in the system. These updates will add specifics to the long-term component of this plan. They will also communicate annual average growth targets in each content area once baseline data become available. The updates will reflect the system's response to external changes, the most important of which will probably be the adoption of statewide academic standards by the State Board of Education. The adoption of these standards, in turn, will prompt a review of Golden Poppy's Challenge standards and assessment program.

In developing its assessment and accountability system, Golden Poppy will rely heavily on the experience and expertise of other Challenge districts as well as the Department of Education. To the maximum extent possible, the district will participate in the activities of the Challenge Standards, Assessment and Accountability Network; however, Golden Poppy's lack of resources will likely limit its participation to the electronic exchange of information. Golden Poppy is willing to share its plan, annual updates, and experiences through the Challenge Web site. It is also exploring the feasibility of establishing a partnership with Sand Dunes Unified School District, which is in the same geographic region as Golden Poppy. This partnership would include exchanging information on a regular basis, sharing standards and performance tasks, and conducting joint professional development activities and visitations.

Golden Poppy realizes that it cannot do this alone. Its success in the Challenge will depend in no small degree on the willingness of its colleagues in other districts and the Department of Education to share their experiences and expertise in areas related to assessment and accountability.

